

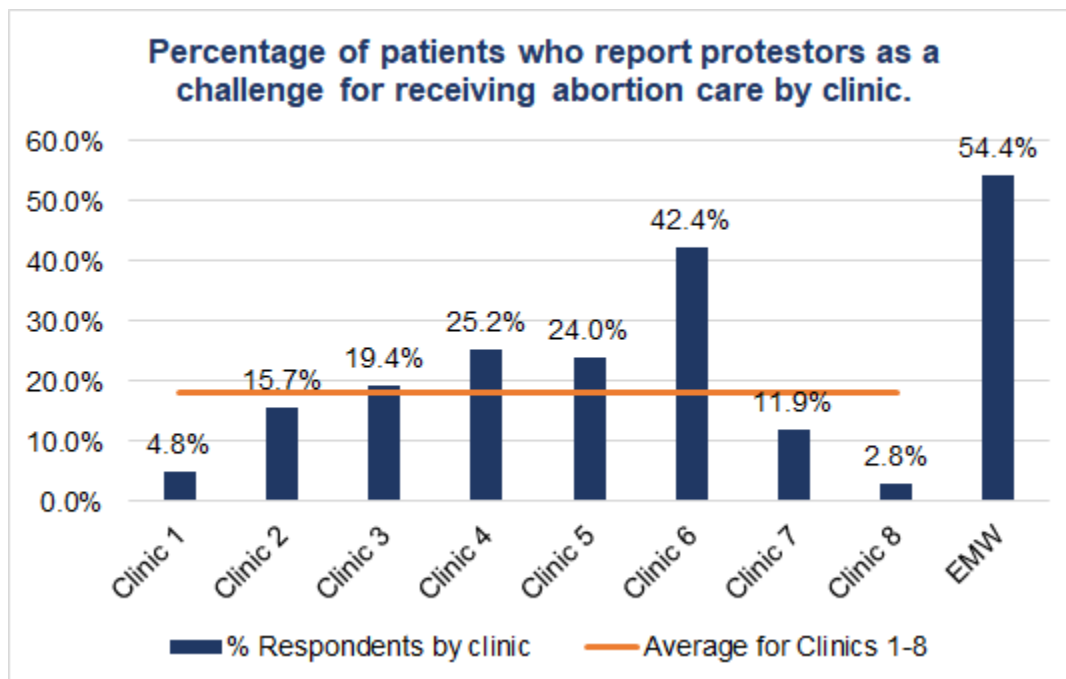


Ohio Policy Evaluation Network

January 6, 2021

OPEN (the Ohio Policy Evaluation Network) is a research collaborative that launched in 2018 to study how policy affects reproductive health and equity in Ohio and surrounding states. OPEN conducts rigorous, impactful, and forward-thinking social-science research on the reproductive health of Ohioans and people in nearby states.

In 2020, OPEN launched a survey of abortion patients in Ohio, Kentucky, and West Virginia. Under the leadership of Dr. Danielle Bessett (Sociology, University of Cincinnati), recruitment began at EMW Women’s Surgical Center, one of 9 sites, on 9/16/2020 and is ongoing through June 2021. Participants are eligible for this survey if they are over the age of 18, are seeking abortion at participating clinics, can complete the survey in English, and are a resident of Ohio, Kentucky, and West Virginia. The survey covers a variety of topics related to care seeking, including questions about patient experiences of protests. We have prepared this report on preliminary survey results at the request of EMW.



\*Based on responses from 1,524 participants as of 12/23/2020.

More than half of all respondents from EMW reported protestors as a challenge to receiving their care (54.4%), nearly three times the average for the other clinic in our study (18.3%). EMW has the highest rate of challenges associated with protestors of all participating clinics.



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## **Verbatim participant responses related to protesters' impact on emotions and clinic access, open-ended questions**

Patients were given the opportunity to provide additional information in open-ended questions. Open-ended questions were optional, and the following themes emerged (with examples below):

Negative opinions on proximity of protesters to clinic:

- *“those disgusting protesters shouldnt be allowed anywhere near the clinic.”*

Menacing and threat from protesters:

- *“The staff at the clinic was very helpful in every way. I had a volunteer escort me into the building and warned me of which protesters were the worst and got between me and an old lady protester that tried to run at me. Without all of this support I would not have been able to make it through that appointment as well as I did.”*

Logistical challenges:

- *“Took a while to find parking lot because of protesters!”*

Protesters as a factor in coming to clinic, suggestive of potential disinclination when protesters are present:

- *“No protestors outside when I came.”*

Challenges to clinic visit due to COVID:

- *“Standing outside while others were checked in and having to listen to the protestors.”*

No open-ended responses reflected positive comments or experiences with protesters.

For questions or clarification, please contact us at [open@osu.edu](mailto:open@osu.edu) or (513) 556-4738.



	Notes on Other violent event	Notes on presence of law enforcement	Other notes on protest presence
2019 December		When present, law enforcement never exit their vehicles to enforce any existing laws or cite violations.	
2020 January		altercations with patient and patient companions Blocking the entrance Sometimes routine monitoring of protesters--LMPD never leave their vehicles	Clarification on blockades---these occur daily at EMW, but usually not for an extended length of time. There is blocking of people as they attempt to exit their cars, blocking of the direct route into EMW, blocking at the back gate where staff needs to enter. If you are referring to blockades that violate the FACE ACT these are not in this category, because it is not a federal offense if you can get patients in from the side if they are blocking the front, etc.
February		patient and patient companion altercations with protesters trespassing noise short blockades	
March		altercations with patients or companions. Several times a month the LMPD will sit in lots and observe the protesters. They don't leave their vehicles and don't enforce covid, trespassing, stalking, shoving violations.	
April	Bomb threat--investigated by FBI and bomb sweeps, dog sweep made by the LMPD	protester altercations with patients and companions several times per month LMPD will watch protesters from a parking lot and they never exit their vehicles	
May		trespassing protester altercation with patients and companions LMPD periodically observing the protesters. LMPD never exit their vehicles	
June	Blockade 36-blocking entrance, sidewalk & vehicles dropping off patients	6/24 LMPD stopped to talk to two unhoused people arguing at the corner of 2nd and Market EMW had police presence 4 Saturday in June. LMPD never exit their vehicles, they sit in a parking lot across the street, they are not close enough to identify violations, they do not enforce existing laws or state covid guidelines.	
July		LMPD called about blockade in back of building. LMPD called about verbal argument on sidewalk between an anti and a companion of a patient. LMPD squad car present 1 of 3 Saturdays in July.	
August		EMW calls LMPD because protesters do not wear masks or social distance violating the Ky executive order. A patient was knocked to her knees by an aggressive protester.	We report the non compliance of the protesters to follow KY executive order--to wear masks and social distance--daily to the state of KY on their hotline and in writing.
September		LMPD was called for protesters not following the state mandate to wear masks, blocking, stalking, swarming, pushing patients and companions and loudspeakers. LMPD was not helpful, did not enforce the mask mandate, was only present for a few minutes and sometimes did not respond to the call.	Blocking on our NAF violence reports is defined as blocking the sidewalk, entrance or drop off zone for more than 30 seconds. These aren't usually counted as FACE ACT violations.
October		Police called on 3 separate dates to report instances of Covid-19 violations and violation of noise ordinance via loudspeakers.	In October a five page document plus photos and video was sent to the Mayor, County Attorney, Metro Council Members, Health Department and the new interim police chief. This is to continue holding the city accountable for the harassment and intimidation that occurs from the protesters. There are many city ordinances being violated daily that the city is not enforcing.
November			The blockades noted were partial blockades and not total blockades. Patients were still able to come inside the clinic and receive care, but with difficulty